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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993

Review of travel and related entitlements for members of organs and subsidiary organs and staff members of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The purpose of the present report is to update the information contained in the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session on travel and related entitlements of members of organs and subsidiary organs and staff members of the United Nations (A/C.5/47/61 and Corr.1). By its decision 47/460 of 23 December 1992, the General Assembly deferred to its forty-eighth session consideration of that report.

2. In the aftermath of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in June 1992, two new subsidiary bodies were established with provision for payment of travel expenses: High-level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development, established by General Assembly resolution 47/191 of 22 December 1992; and Commission on Sustainable Development, established by Economic and Social Council decision 1993/207 of 12 February 1993. The members of the High-level Advisory Board participate in their personal capacity and are consequently entitled to payment of both travel and subsistence expenses. The Commission on Sustainable Development was established as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council and, upon the recommendation of the Council, the General Assembly, by its resolution 47/212 B of 6 May 1993 on the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, approved a provision for payment of travel expenses to representatives attending meetings of the Commission.

3. An updated list of subsidiary bodies whose members are entitled to payment of travel expenses for attendance at meetings may be found in annex I. Annex II contains an updated list of subsidiary bodies whose members are entitled to payment of both travel and subsistence expenses.

4. In paragraph 33 of General Assembly document A/C.5/47/61, a proposal was made to limit the payment of travel expenses for representatives in subsidiary

organs of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to those from the least developed countries. It will be recalled that travel expenses for such bodies are paid only for those subsidiary bodies identified as exceptions by the General Assembly. In paragraph 34 of document A/C.5/47/61, the savings which would result from a decision by the General Assembly to limit the payment of travel expenses for representatives in subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to those from the least developed countries were estimated at $670,000 per annum. The anticipated savings pertaining to the Commission on Sustainable Development, which are not included in the above figure, are estimated at some $84,000 per annum. Total anticipated savings thus amount to $754,000 per annum.

5. As indicated in paragraph 40 of document A/C.5/47/61, travel, but not subsistence, expenses are paid for representatives in functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, where such representatives are nominated by their Governments in consultation with the Secretary-General and subsequently confirmed by the Council or where, in the case of representatives nominated directly by their Governments, the Council recommends and the General Assembly decides that such payments should be made. Subject to the above conditions, travel expenses are also paid for representatives in subcommissions or subcommittees of functional commissions.

6. In paragraph 41 of document A/C.5/47/61, it was suggested that the General Assembly might wish to reconsider the exceptional payment of travel expenses which it previously authorized in respect of representatives in functional commissions, and subcommissions or subcommittees thereof, where such representatives are nominated directly by their Governments. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development were cited as the two subsidiary bodies in that category.

7. General Assembly resolution 46/235 of 13 April 1992, which established the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, makes no provision for representatives to be nominated by their Governments in consultation with the Secretary-General and subsequently confirmed by the Economic and Social Council. It has been established, however, that representatives in the Commission on Science and Technology for Development have indeed been designated in consultation with the Secretary-General and have subsequently been confirmed by the Economic and Social Council. This Commission should therefore not be considered as an exception under paragraph 41 of document A/C.5/47/61.

8. By its decision 1993/207, the Economic and Social Council recommended that the General Assembly make "the necessary provisions so that travel expenses for one of the representatives of each Member State elected to the Commission on Sustainable Development participating in a session of the Commission or its subsidiary organs are paid from the regular budget of the United Nations". The General Assembly made provision for the payment of travel expenses to representatives attending the two sessions of the Commission scheduled for 1993, in the context of the approval of revised appropriations for the biennium 1992-1993 as a result of the restructuring of the Secretariat.

9. Although representatives in the Commission were nominated directly by their Governments, the General Assembly did not explicitly address this issue in making provision for the payment of travel expenses for 1993. It is therefore

unclear whether the General Assembly intended such payments to continue beyond 1993. The General Assembly is consequently requested to consider this question at its current session. Should the General Assembly authorize the continued payment of travel expenses, given the conditions under which representatives are currently nominated, the Commission on Sustainable Development would become a second exception under paragraph 41 of document A/C.5/47/61.

10. Paragraphs 45 to 47 of document A/C.5/47/61 addressed the issue of exceptional travel assistance to representatives from the least developed and other developing countries. Examples of situations where such assistance has been provided under trust fund arrangements were given in paragraph 45. It should be noted that, in connection with the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders held in 1990, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/49 of 28 May 1987, provision for travel assistance to representatives from the least developed and other developing countries was made under the regular budget by General Assembly resolution 44/202 of 21 December 1989 on the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991.

11. At its forty-seventh session, the General Assembly established trust funds for the provision of travel assistance to the least developed and other developing countries in two more cases. By its resolutions 47/188 and 47/189, both adopted on 22 December 1992, the General Assembly established voluntary funds, respectively for the participation of developing countries affected by desertification and drought, in particular the least developed countries, in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification; and to assist small island developing States and the least developed countries to participate in the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and in its preparatory process.

Annex I

SUBSIDIARY ORGANS WHOSE MEMBERS ARE ENTITLED TO PAYMENT OF TRAVEL EXPENSES FOR ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS a/

Commission for Social Development

Commission on Human Rights

Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Commission on Science and Technology for Development b/

Commission on Sustainable Development c/

Commission on the Status of Women

Population Commission

Special Commission to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Statistical Commission

United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation

Notes

a/ In view of the outstanding questions regarding the entitlement to the payment of travel expenses of members of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (see A/C.5/47/61, paras. 42-44), this body has not been included in the above list.

b/ Established as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council, on 13 April 1992, in replacement of the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development and the Advisory Committee on Science and Technology for Development.

c/ Established as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council, by the Council's decision 1993/207 of 12 February 1993.

Annex II

SUBSIDIARY ORGANS WHOSE MEMBERS ARE ENTITLED TO PAYMENT OF TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE EXPENSES FOR ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Board of Auditors

Committee for Development Planning

Committee for Programme and Coordination

Committee on Contributions

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Committee on Natural Resources a/

Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development b/

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women c/

Council of the United Nations University

High-level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development d/

Human Rights Committee c/

International Civil Service Commission

International Law Commission

International Narcotics Control Board

Investments Committee

Joint Inspection Unit

Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance

Scientific and Technical Committee on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

Special High-level Council for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities

United Nations Administrative Tribunal

United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board and Committee (members appointed by the General Assembly)

United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (Committee of Actuaries)

Visiting missions to Trust Territories

Notes

a/ Established by General Assembly resolution 46/235 of 13 April 1992. Assumes the mandate of the former Committee on Natural Resources in respect of mineral and water resources.

b/ Established by General Assembly resolution 46/235 of 13 April 1992, in replacement of the former Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy. Also assumed the mandate of the former Committee on Natural Resources pertaining to energy.

c/ Treaty body.

d/ Established by General Assembly resolution 47/191 of 22 December 1992.